

Asian Pacific American Heritage Month Background

May is Asian Pacific American (APA) Heritage Month to honor the cultures, traditions, and achievements of Asians and Pacific Islanders in the United States. Like Black History and Women's History Month, APA Heritage Month originated in a congressional legislation.

In June 1977, Congressmen Frank Horton of New York and Norman Y. Mineta of California introduced a House resolution that called upon the President to proclaim the first ten days of May as Asian/Pacific Heritage Week. The following month, senators Daniel Inouye and Spark Matsunaga introduced a similar bill in the Senate. Both bills were passed. On October 5, 1978, President Jimmy Carter signed a Joint Resolution designating the annual celebration.

In May 1990, the festival was expanded when President George H. W. Bush designated May as Asian Pacific American Heritage Month. May was chosen to commemorate the official entry of the first Japanese immigrant to the United States in 1843.

Currently there are sixty Asian Pacific American ethnic subgroups representing a vast array of languages and cultures. These subgroups are listed in the following table:

Asian Pacific American Ethnic Subgroups		
Bangladeshi	Indochinese	Pakistani
Bhutanese	Indonesian	Papua New Guinean
Bikini Islander	Iwo-Jiwan	Polynesian
Borneon	Japanese	Ponapean
Burmese	Javanese	Saipanese
Cambodian	Korean	Samoan
Carolinian	Kwajalein Islander	Sikkim
Celebesian	Laotian	Singaporean
Cerem	Malayan	Solomon Islander
Cernam	Maldavian	Sri Lankan
Chinese	Mariana Islander	Tahitian
Cosmopolitan	Marshall Islander	Taiwanese
Eniwetok Islander	Marshallese	Tarawa Islander
Eurasian	Melanesian	Thai
Fujian	Micronesian	Tinian Islander
Filipino	Mien	Tokelauan
Guamanian	Mongolian	Tongan
Hawai'ian	Nepali	Trukese
Hmong	New Hebrides Islander	Vietnamese
Indian	Okinawan	Yapese

To celebrate the president's declaration, a group of Asian-Pacific employees here at the FAA William J. Hughes Technical Center began to organize cultural activities during the Asian-

Pacific Heritage Month between years 1994 and 1996. The purpose of these activities was to introduce the richness of Asian-Pacific cultures to all Technical Center employees in order to promote cultural understanding and stronger working relations among Asian-Pacific employees and the rest of the Technical Center community.

In December of 1996, members of the Asian Pacific American Committee decided to formally establish this group in the form of a Coalition and it was named as the Asian and Pacific American Coalition (APAC). They also decided that this Coalition will be one of employee associations to be supported by the Civil Rights Office at Technical Center.